

Written by Emily Glynn



For families with children battling life-threatening diagnoses, Ryan House feels like coming home.

The space is bright and sunny, the walls adorned with beautiful hand-painted murals. All of the children's bedrooms open onto the patio and playground areas, and on any given day, families can be found settling in for a movie in the spacious Great Room or splashing around in the hydrotherapy pool.

You would never guess that the facility is a state-of-the-art medical institution – one of two in the country providing palliative care to terminally ill children. "People are sometimes afraid to come here," says Executive Director Alyssa Crockett. "But once they walk through those doors, it's like magic."

In addition to easing the pain of their young patients, caregivers at Ryan House allow parents, siblings and other family members, often physically and emotionally drained, to take a break from providing round-the-clock care. Some use the opportunity as a stay-cation and remain with their child over the course of the visit. Others choose to rest and recuperate elsewhere, free from worry. Says Crockett: "[Parents] know and can trust that their child, who is very medically fragile, will be given the best care here – and that they will be happy."

The organization relies entirely on the generosity of the community to keep its doors open and on Wednesday, May 6, will host the Ryan House Community Breakfast in order to continue growing its support base.

The event will begin with registration, networking and raffle prizes at 7:30 a.m. at Arizona Biltmore, followed by an hour-long program emceed by Marlene Galan Woods. Tony La Russa, MLB Hall of Famer and Arizona Diamondbacks Chief Baseball Officer, has been named this year's Honorary Chair and will join Crockett in expounding the virtues of Ryan House during the breakfast.

The morning will also feature Jacque Wagner as the family keynote speaker, a video about Ryan House created by True Story Films and Copper Post, and a blessing from Ryan Cottor, the inspiration behind Ryan House.

"We're so grateful for the support that has made Ryan House possible," says Crockett. "Our founding partners, especially the Board of Visitors and Hospice of the Valley, invested in the dream, made it a reality and have helped sustain it for five years [now]. It's given peace to so many children and families."

Inspired? Do your part by registering at ryanhouse.org. Every penny counts.